Volume XCIV No. 4 April 2, 1971 40 cents

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Let a Million Voters Bloom!

THE REPUDIATION OF RICHARD NIXON

MICHAEL NOVAK

Situation Ethnics

PETER FREIBERG

U. S. Senate Southern-side Up

JOHN BRIGHT

Hate & Hope in the Deep South

JERRY DE MUTH

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NEWS & VIEWS

Jamie Gets Caught

It seemed ominous in February when the funding of all federal environmental and consumer protection programs was slipped to the jurisdiction of Rep. Jamie Whitten (D.-Miss).

It looms as disaster now.

For not only is Whitten an environmental troglodyte, a detail long known; it turns out he is a patsy for the pesticide industry.

The *Washington Post* exposed this fact in revealing that the pesticides industry helped conceive, guarantee and promote Whitten's 1966 book, *That We May Live*, a pro-pesticide tract published as an antidote to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.

The industry lined up the publisher, propped sales, underwrote the paperback edition completely, and even found a translator for a foreign edition of the book.

The book never did very well, but that's not the point.

The point is that as chairman of the agriculture subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, Whitten commands the preeminent Congressional voice in how much is spent and what for in crucial pollution-control programs.

It is a situation involving a clear conflict of interest, and sufficiently important so that if Whitten doesn't disqualify himself from the post, the Congress itself should act.

Re-Making the Image

It's not certain that Richard Nixon's media campaign to polish the image is going all that well.

It took four minutes of labored monologue for Mr. Nixon to handle the "Today" show inquiry whether he worried because the public regarded him "as rather a stuffy man." (Nixon reassured that he wasn't like athletes, so concerned about what is said that "they don't play the game well.")

His afterthought memo to London *Sunday Telegraph* interviewer Peregrine Worsthorne contained the infelicitous likening of himself to "T.R.," in many ways the classic symbol of American imperialism. He should have have left well enough alone there.

Then there was the interview with the *Times*' C. L. Sulzberger, in which Nixon juxtaposed such self-canceling statements as: ". . . I seriously doubt if we will ever have another war. This is probably the very last one." . . . "I am a strong Navy man myself. I believe in a strong conventional navy which helps us to play a peace-keeping role in such areas, for example, as Latin America."

No more wars, in other words, but more peace-keeping, as in Korea and Indochina. You figure it out.

Courts on Campus

Cardinal Cushing remarked at one time that he wouldn't touch federal aid if it were handed him, because he didn't want the government telling him how to run Catholic schools.

Cushing later changed his stance. That his original impulse was no paranoid fancy, however, is demonstrated by the recent incident at Catholic University involving Ti-Grace Atkinson.

Student representatives called for and received from Federal District Court Judge Joseph Lewis Smith, Jr., an injunction upsetting the C.U. ban on Ti-Grace from speaking on campus.

The university argued that C.U. was a private school and therefore the issue could not be tried in a public court. The court saw otherwise. It justified intervention on grounds that C.U. received federal funds. (About 25 percent of University funds come from government, a C.U. spokesman conceded, mainly in grants to science departments.)

Thus the ruling that set the stage for the slapping-match featuring P. Buckley Bozell. Whether it will also set the stage for a follow-up court challenge is uncertain at the moment. It should, if it is likely that the Smith ruling will be taken as legal precedent.

Back to Con Son

Old Vietnam hand Don Luce reports via Liberation News Service a new burst of construction on the penal island of Con Son, site of the infamous "tiger cages."

Three new blocks of isolation cells are being built under a $400,000 contract with the California firm of Raymond, Morrison, Knudson, Brown, Root and Jones (RMK-BRJ), a construction consortium.

Each block will contain 96 cells, thus substantially lifting accommodation levels of the island to which South Vietnam's "political" prisoners are dispatched.

According to Luce, the project enjoys a "top ten" rating, which means that it receives priority in the routing of supplies and assignment of personnel. Prisoners are being used as laborers, with the skilled being paid 200 piasters a week (72 cents) and the unskilled 150 piasters (55 cents).

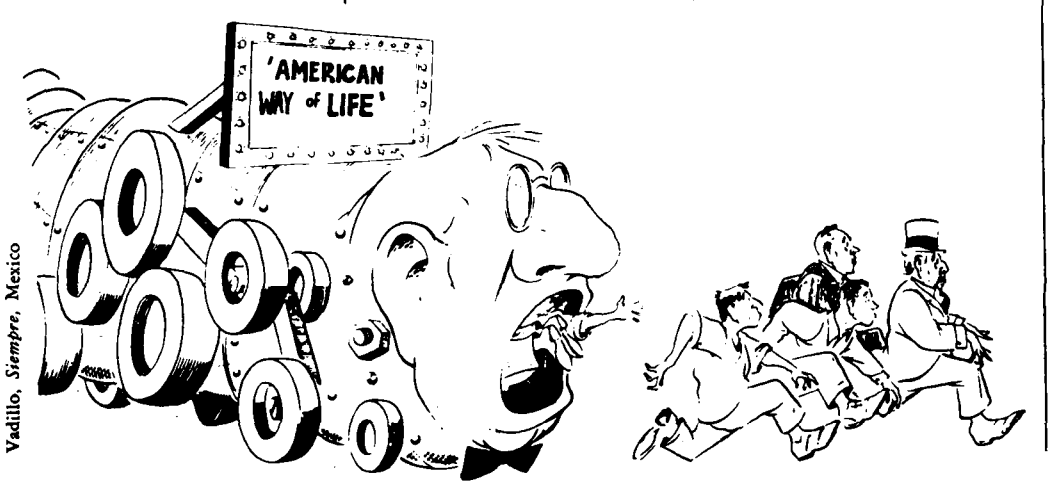
Both contractor and the U.S. government are making what Luce terms "a concerted effort" to keep the project secret. "Anyone who even takes a camera to Con Son will be terminated immediately," a RMK-BRJ official is reported to have notified personnel.

Small wonder. Con Son was supposed to be dismantled, not expanded, after the official investigation which followed last July's gruesome revelations.

Odds and Ends

If you count Richard Nixon's appearance at the Coast Guard Academy to commission son-in-law David, it raises to six the number of campuses visited by the President since his inauguration in January, 1969.

The other stops in his effort to "communicate" with young people: Dakota State College, June 3, 1969; U.S. Air Force Academy, June 4, 1969; Kansas State University, Sept. 16, 1970; East Tennessee University, Oct. 20, 1970; University of Nebraska, Jan. 14, 1970. . . . Not what you'd call touching bases exactly. JOHN DEEDY



Vadillo, *Siempre*, Mexico

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CORRESPONDENCE

Sister Tenacious?

Pittsburgh, Pa.

To the Editors: Re: *News and Views,* 12 March 1971: The nine nuns who walked out of St Raymond's School in Detroit and all those who support their action are missing the whole point of the job to be done in combating white racism. Recognizing that racism and un-Christian attitudes exist is a necessary prelude to the second step of eradicating racism and un-Christian attitudes. These nine nuns, who apparently recognized the negative attitudes, are the ones who should stay and fight. Nobody ever said it was going to be easy. Chances are great that the next group to staff St. Raymond's School will be—as the parishioners seemingly are—white bigots. And then where are we? It is so much easier for whites to be paternalizing in the black communities than to be out where the problem really exists. ROSEMARY GEMPERLE

"Hard Time" Outside

No. Dartmouth, Mass.

To the Editors: Regarding "Life Behind Bars" [Feb. 26], there is a bitterness after prison that is as bad as that in jail; it might, in fact, be one of its causes.

We have a situation in our country whereby persons who have been arrested or convicted of a crime must bear this mark on them for years afterward, including on job applications. This tradition forces them to submit to another judgment for the same crime. Can we start to remove the bitterness in prison before removing the certain knowledge that one will be condemned to the status of a second-class citizen after he has "paid his debt to society"?

If justice has been dealt "fairly", there can be no reason to continually punish a man or to perpetuate the caste system where those who have done no wrong (or have never been caught) can lord it over those who have. The great dividing line is the one that reads:

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Front cover illustration: Behrendt, Het Parool, *Amsterdam*

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COMMONWEAL *A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.*
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.
Printed in the USA and published weekly,
except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,
by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016
MUrray Hill 3-2042. *Copyright © 1971 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.*
US and Canada, $12 a year. Foreign $14. Single copies 40¢

PANDORA'S BOX

Protectionist winds have been blowing through the halls of Congress for lo! these many months. Textiles, shoes, handbags—the list of industries wanting the federal government to raise walls against foreign competition is long. Feeling the economic pinch at home, they want to squeeze out imports, and they have little patience with those who worry about what this would do to U.S. exports or with those who point out the role of high tariffs in bringing on the last great world depression.

The loudest cries of all have been coming from the textile industry, and it was legislation to aid that industry to which protectionist amendments in favor of this, that and the other American industry were added. It is for this reason that the agreement of the Japanese textile producers voluntarily to limit their textile export sales was so welcome. Chiefly responsible for this success was Congressman Wilbur D. Mills, the powerful chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, who urged a voluntary move by the Japanese to head off the threat of restrictive Congressional action. No one expected the textile industry to be completely satisfied with the Japanese pledge to restrict increases in textile imports to five percent a year for the next year, and to six percent a year for the two years following that. It was expected, however, that President Nixon would urge the textile producers that half a loaf was better than none, especially given the risks of the all-or-nothing approach.

Nonetheless, Mr. Nixon did not react as he was expected to; instead he rejected the Japanese offer as inadequate and threw his "strong support" behind restrictive legislation that would establish mandatory quotas. Even more surprising was the President's manner: reporters described him as visibly angry, and he characterized the Japanese offer as a "maneuver" that was "apparently ratified by the government of Japan"—hardly the way a head of state normally talks about a friendly government. The suggested voluntary agreement, Mr. Nixon said, simply would not solve the problem of "excessive" imports.

On this score, those who favor high tariffs have given a misleading picture of the extent of Japanese textile imports, and it is possible that Mr. Nixon has been unduly influenced by them. In fact, the *New York Times* reports the value of all textile imports to the United States is only

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six percent of total textile consumption in this country, and of that six percent, Japanese imports make up only about one-quarter.

With unemployment up in the United States, textile imports represent a political problem for Mr. Nixon, with a large part of his problem stemming from the fact that in 1968 he campaigned on a firm pledge to "do something" about textile imports—a promise which was easier to make during the heat of a campaign than to implement. Despite the political delicacy of the issue for Mr. Nixon, however, a voluntary solution to this difficult problem is infinitely better than the passage of protectionist legislation. As Mr. Mills said: "I cannot understand how under any circumstances a statutory program for the protection of a single industry can be developed which is exclusive of consideration of statutory programs for other affected industries."

In this regard Congressman Mills is surely right; the bill pending in the last Congress to give relief to the textile industry also contained potential and actual restrictions on a whole host of other items and aroused great fear in capitals around the world. The fact is that protectionist legislation in the United States would almost inevitably lead to a world trade war. Whatever the President's political debts, this is one thing we cannot afford.

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U.S. SENATE

SOUTHERN-SIDE UP

Just as baseball has been until recently a game for Southern rednecks, so the United States Senate has been a sanctuary for solons of the old Confederacy. The Senate is a home away from home. So is the House of Representatives, but with differing atmosphere. The Senate is more like Scarlett O'Hara's Tara; the House is akin to a boarding-house for Confederate war veterans.

Southern customs and manners pervade the Institution —refuting John Kennedy's quip that Washington is a place of Northern charm and Southern efficiency. It's a place of Southern charm *and* Southern efficiency. The Stars-and-Bars format of the state flags stand in the offices of some Southerners. Rigid racists and patrioteers are raised to membership in the senatorial Pantheon even before death and, after demise, are accorded columns of awed praise in The Congressional Record—not only from their collegial confederates. Some Northern Democrats also pay political tithes on these occasions in order to avoid retaliation of the Boll Weevils, strategically placed in the seniority pecking order. Seven of the 10 most senior are Southerners, including Allen Ellender of Louisiana, President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Of the 17 standing committees, Southerners are chairman of nine, including Appropriations, Armed Services, Banking and Currency, Finance, Government Operations, and Rules and Administration.

The most recent manifestation of the South's steady grip upon the Senate is illustrated by an effort earlier this year to blunt the finely legislative art of the filibuster. It is, of course, the filibuster—its threat as well as its actual application—that has enfeebled, thwarted and otherwise maimed efforts to pass effective remedial legislation in the fields of education, civil rights and urban affairs. Southerners, trained as legislators and parliamentarians and not as potential Presidents, are masters of the parliamentary arts—including the filibuster. It's a technocratic pleasure to observe outnumbered Southern seniors perform their parliamentary strategems against legislation bearing majority support. It's like watching Edmund Burke against Rep. Jim Delaney of Brooklyn. Freshman Senators from the South, Chiles of Florida and Gambrell of Georgia, sit for hours on the Senate chamber, watching, observing, learning, preparing for the day when they they will be the successors to the present parliamentary foxes, Long of Louisiana, Stennis of Mississippi and Sparkman of Alabama. On the other hand, Liberals, raised to be President and not legislators, are too busy pursuing their predestined star to ever bother to learn the rules of the Institution to which they are elected. They who control the rules, control the Institution.

The rules of the Senate are a legislator's dream for skillful Southern sentinels of the status quo. Thomas Brackett Reed of Maine, the greatest of the Speakers of the House of Representatives, disclosed the philosophical foundation of the rules in his Institution: "Ever since the slavery question came to trouble the peace of the country," Reed said, "the rules of the House have been framed with the view of rendering legislation difficult. The South was anxious that there should be ample means at its disposal to stop any measure detrimental to its cherished institution."

Reed's statement was made *not* before the Civil War, but *after*—a quarter-century later. His perception is equally applicable to the Senate—and to the House—today. Slavery has been dissolved, but the Senators and Representatives from the white South, our Sicily, continue to control the drafting and adoption of the rules in the United States Congress.

There is perhaps no stronger weapon in the arsenal of these rules than the filibuster. Since its first sitting, the Senate has been cursed with the filibuster. For a greater part of its existence, there were no restrictions on mara-

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thon talking sessions; that is, until March, 1917. That month, the Senate was forced into adopting a mild restraint on speechifying. In the 64th Congress, the Senate had filibustered to its grave a bill of the Wilson Administration to authorize the arming of American merchant ships in response to the German submarine threat in the Atlantic. Enraged, President Wilson worked the country into an equally angry lather. When the new Congress convened, the Senate promptly adopted by a vote of 76 to 3 votes a new rule of procedure whereby inexcusably prolonged discussion—that is, the filibuster—could be brought to an end if two-thirds of Senators, present and voting, concurred—an act of "cloture." This provision is found in Rule 22. During its existence of 54 years, Rule 22 has proved to be an inadequate restraint upon the abuse of speechmaking. It is impossible—virtually so—for a two-thirds majority to be mustered. There have been 53 cloture attempts since the adoption of Rule 22. Only eight of these have been successful, a 15 percent effort.

Perennial Battle

In recent times, efforts have been made to reduce this required majority to three-fifths or even to a simple majority. The battle is launched in the Senate chamber every two years; that is, at the beginning of each new Congress. For example, earlier this year, four attempts were made during a seven-week period to modify the cloture rule to a three-fifths formula, a modest enough proposal. Each failed; the last by 8 votes, 55 to 39.

During the debate this year, Senator Allen of Alabama openly taunted the proponents of a change in Rule 22. (There was, in fact, no important legislative business awaiting action of the full Senate and the rate of absenteeism among Democratic liberals was disproportionately high.) Allen denigrated the reform effort as a biennial charade, in effect. He suggested proponents were using the issue as a means of avoiding having to stay in Washington—a time for vacationing or exploring one's Presidential aspirations. Senator Hollings (D-S.C.), who knows better, suggested that the two-thirds formula indeed should be changed—to 70 percent. Other Southerners likewise mocked and twitted the reformers. Their barbs were not without some merit. Except for Senators Hart, Church and Javits, principal proponents, few supporters showed themselves in the Chamber to argue the merits of the case to which they had given their formal adherence.

It was a classic example of an intense minority winning over a flabby majority. John Calhoun, Richard Hofstadter's Marx of the Master Class, would have been pleased. Calhoun's reactionary doctrine of the concurrent majority was succeeding in the Senate—again. Indeed, during the time the reform effort was being debated, Senator Kennedy spoke in praise of Calhoun at a Democratic Party gathering in Charleston, S.C.

The defense of the cloture rule, as it now exists, denotes a siege mentality on the part of the Senate—an outlook primarily rooted among the Southerners with irregular support from their Republican allies from the Midwest. To persist in this intransigence is to affirm that the supreme legislative assembly in our nation wishes to remain insulated, in the utmost degree, from the bruising problems of the demanding decade of the 1970s. It is as if Senators covet the thick, masonry, fortress-like walls of the Capitol building that enfolds the Chamber. It is a negatively charged vision of senatorial duties and responsibilities. *New Republic* magazine and Nicholas von Hoffmann, the evangelist of the disaffected, to the contrary, effective legislation, whether to end the brutal war or curtail the militarization of American life, is better accomplished by a relaxed cloture rule than by the current one. Obstructionism, from whatever political direction, can only diminish the opportunity of the legislative branch of the federal government to wrest back its constitutional powers from the Presidential Caesars. If unchanged, the cloture rule remains an insurmountable roadblock across the legislative pathways.

At present, the Congress—the Senate and the House of Representatives together—resemble a broken mirror in which the nation cannot recognize its own image. Paradoxically, the Senate, with its impressive number of able members, seems unable to create its own greening. The parts somehow seem to add to something less than the whole. In large measure, it is because old-line Southerners hold the command posts and set the tone. They've retained command of the filibuster for another two years. Two days after that victory, Senator Harry Byrd, Jr., of Virginia introduced a bill to restore citizenship to Robert E. Lee. It seemed logical somehow, considering the Senate as it stands today. JOHN BRIGHT

(John Bright is the pseudonym of a Congressional employee known to the editors.)

COMING

GREGORY BAUM writes about Hans Küng's controversial new book on infallibility:

"While some theologians may disagree with him—and I shall express my own reservations—Küng stands wholly within the Catholic theological tradition despite the apparent novelty of his view. He upholds the church as the ground and pillar of truth. The church communicates the Gospel unfailingly. At the same time he courageously faces the fact that the changes in ecclesiastical teaching which have occurred over the centuries demand a theological explanation."

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THE PRESS, PRESIDENT & PENTAGON

PETER STEINFELS

WEEK AFTER week I find myself drawn to writing about the media rather than the message. The reason is obvious. For all our efforts to maintain some direct contact with forces in public life, whether in the government or "grass roots," for all the eye strain caused by our losing battle to peruse a vast and ever-increasing number of journals of information and interpretation, people like myself are still heavily dependent on a few sources like the *New York Times,* for our notions of what is happening in the world. Papers like the *Times* and the *Washington Post,* Daniel Moynihan has pointed out, not only inform the public about its government, they are also extremely important organs of communication *within* the government.

Moynihan's remark is found in an article on "The President and the Press" in the March issue of *Commentary.* It is his thesis that the balance of power between President and press is being tipped in favor of the press, and this process could even reach the point where "our capacity for effective democratic government will be seriously and dangerously weakened." Moynihan begins his article with what he says is a comment "Harry S. Truman wrote a friend":

"I really look with commiseration over the great body of my fellow citizens, who, reading the newspapers, live and die in the belief that they have known something of what has been passing in the world in their time."

A ringing statement, but not a very good way for Moynihan to begin an article scolding reporters for their inaccuracies. The quotation comes from Thomas Jefferson.

Two other attacks on the media have caught my eye. *Air Force* magazine ("The Magazine of Aerospace Power") has charged that CBS doctored footage to "create" statements by Pentagon spokesmen for its widely hailed documentary, "The Selling of the Pentagon." Vice President Agnew then repeated these charges and added ones about past documentaries on hunger and Haitian rebels. The result was that CBS agreed to a 15-minute exchange of views following the rebroadcast of "Selling."

None of these criticisms strikes me as very substantial. The *Air Force* charges raise old problems of editing material down to the segments digestible by television, and at what point the inevitable interpretive bias involved in such editing turns into sleight-of-hand. It would be instructive to track down to the last detail the *Air Force* criticism; but it looks to me like "The Selling of the Pentagon" would survive with only a few bandaids at most. Agnew, I suspect, recognized the weakness of this case; that may be why he hauled out the old charges about the hunger documentary and Haiti. The fuss over "Hunger in America" dates back to a shocking effort to discredit the film and intimidate investigators made by Congressman Jamie Whitten, on whose integrity you may consult News & Views. The Haiti business, which certainly did involve some CBS tomfoolery, is equally outdated.

Mr. Moynihan, for all his sniping at free-lance intellectuals, is one himself. He can never resist the clever example, the sweeping generalization, the juggling of ideas, the choice of a flamboyant (and sometimes inflaming) phrase over a dull one: a *virtuoso* trying to dance on a tightwire with one foot in his mouth. Frankly, I find all this endearing, and frequently find myself arguing on Moynihan's behalf with friends who heatedly disapprove of him. But his *Commentary* article, I fear, is as slight in solid evidence as it is inflated in warnings. Mr. Moynihan lets us in on the little error and leaks that have long been part of Washington reporting. He makes some very questionable historical assertions about the role of muckraking and the relationship of the press to McCarthyism. He ignores the many counter-examples which could be, and have been, brought forward against his thesis. He is shocked that a generation of journalists may be emerging who find the war in Vietnam "not tragic, not heartbreaking, not vastly misconceived, but *shameful.*" Why, the very idea!

What he is finally saying, it seems to me, is that the press and the government elites should reestablish that chummy club relationship which the war in Vietnam has eroded—and this in the name of democracy.

On one point, however—and an important one—Moynihan is absolutely right. The American press lacks a tradition of self-correction. Whatever the value of the charges against "The Selling of the Pentagon," television should find a suitable way to air these differences. And this should not happen only when the critics have the Vice President of the United States on their side. The *New York Times,* despite its institution of an "Op-Ed" page, still does not, to my knowledge, print letters questioning matters of reportorial accuracy. It says it will investigate such questions and print corrections when necessary —but of course this leaves the newspaper its own judge, rather than the reader. When Edward Jay Epstein documented the baselessness of the charge, printed in the *Times* as well as the *Washington Post* and many other papers, that 27 Panthers had been killed by the police, the *Post* recognized its errors in a lead editorial. From the *Times:* silence.

If the major media are to retain their credibility, they will have to open themselves to more criticism and candid self-correction.

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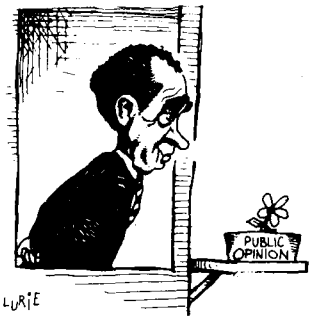

LET A MILLION VOTERS BLOOM

The repudiation of Richard Nixon

MICHAEL NOVAK

The repudiation of Richard Nixon as President and chief symbol of America is an urgent political priority for the next twenty months. It will not be enough, by 1972, to have ended the war. Repudiation will also be called for because of the bloodshed, violence and long delay by means of which the President directed the war for four years. Indeed, Nixon's plan is not to end the war, but to intensify it and to leave during the confusion—like starting a brawl in a barroom and slipping out the swinging door. The costs in Indochinese deaths, uncertainties and future antagonisms do not outbalance the saving of the lives of Americans.

Nixon, however, is competent. In retrospect, even the elections of 1970 play to his advantage. By moving in an ugly way toward the Right, and accepting the proof that no national coalition is to be found there, Nixon is now free—in fact impelled—to move toward the Left, in order to end up in dead Center. Against objections on the Right, he has tangible proof to which to point: the vivid contrast between the public response to his Phoenix speech and that to Muskie's fireside chat. (Not to mention the decline of Agnew from household word to public doghouse. A good man, Spiro Agnew, self-made, uncultured, tough, but no stupid ideologue: another victim to the Nixon climb.)

The Democrats will, let us hope, be extremely cautious about nominating Muskie. It is no comfort to recognize the mobilization of support for Muskie on the right wing of the party: in Texas, the South, in the unions, in the Connally-Humphrey bloc. Muskie is at least an ethnic American, a shrewd politician, and a decent man. The most alienated Americans, the workers, no doubt trust him (a little), and that is a very great plus. The politics of Maine, however, are hardly like those of the rest of the country, and the evidence that Muskie is anything more than a shrewd and loyal party man, warm as a ski-lodge fire and as equally cool, is not yet in.

Senator McGovern will have immense difficulty in going all the way, but the constituency that supported Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy has in him the best vehicle at present for expressing their desire that American politics seek more than quietude: McGovern at least says "Forward." The voice coming from Muskie, suitable in 1968 and 1970, at best seems to say "Calm." Inner peace and courage we all need, but calm is not our inheritance. The longer fundamental political changes are delayed, the more tempestuous the future we prepare for our children. It is for their sakes, now, that we labor. (Countless parents, who, for the sake of their children's status and mobility sacrificed a great deal, face still another set of demanding labors: the remaking of political structure.)

Businessmen and corporations have a large stake in national and international tranquillity. With them we need to imagine and help to construct a new technological "complex," as Max Stackhouse has recently argued, to counterbalance the "military-industrial-university complex." We need a pluralism of complexes. Internal justice, environmental health and a fresh arrangement of employment, productivity and leisure also require vast financial, technical and organized complexes for their support. A complex for international equity should here have special mention: we cannot long endure having wealth while others starve. If the

MICHAEL NOVAK *is the author of several books, most recently,* The Experience of Nothingness *(Harper & Row).*

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plural systems of our economic life do not work for the enhanced life of the entire planet, we doom the human race.

Meanwhile, what shall we do? The importance of the symbols of the Presidency must not be underestimated. Millions of decisions made by citizens each day are necessarily affected by the symbolic range of the Presidency. Commissioners of education, judges, lawyers, businessmen, parents—according to their expectation of help from Washington—millions decide whether they will put their necks on the line for advances they perceive as necessary. Against entrenched local interests, dissidents may succeed if in the last resort they are supported, at the very least morally and often tangibly, by federal intent. On whom else may those who locally are weak depend? If "Nixon's the one," millions of daily choices are prudently steered toward doing nothing.

In international affairs, meanwhile, Nixon is far bolder than we had imagined. He is an adventurer. "RE-ELECT LBJ," the sign read, "HE KEPT US OUT OF CAMBODIA." Whatever we may say of Lyndon Johnson's advisers, none aspired to be the new Metternich. Since Nixon is reported to have cherished the heroes of *Patton* and *Chisum*, the Senate should at the very least insist on the power to advise and consent concerning the movies to which he exposes himself.

At this point, the hysteria of the Left has not served our good judgment in foreign policy. The many historical entanglements of the people of Cambodia, Laos, South Vietnam, North Vietnam and China are not simple ones, and the villains and the good guys keep changing the color of their hats. The Chinese do not trust North Vietnam as a buffer state: they have built roads in northern Laos as a warning. It is unlikely they will want North Vietnamese dominance in Laos. Indochina is a hornets' nest of conflicting interests; we must get out before the confusion envelops us totally.

The North Vietnamese are not without their own imperial ambitions in Indochina. One would wish that Noam Chomsky and his friends extended some of their abundant humanitarian sympathies to the people of South Vietnam. Brave are the people of North Vietnam. But, even in the terms of the American Left, if the South Vietnamese are hopelessly corrupt, whence come the cadres of the National Liberation Front? (Do not exclude those members of the Front who ride limousines and work in Ministries in Saigon.) It is foolish to deny that courage, honor and dedication respect the arbitrary parallel separating North from South Vietnam, or that good men fight on both sides.

On all the people of Indochina, meanwhile, on the courageous and the cowardly, on the honorable and the corrupt, vast American technology spews indiscriminate fire. American lives are not worth more than Indochinese lives. It is both impolitic and inhumane to make Indochinese peasants pay with their lives for an American need to report lower American casualties. A curtain of fire is even less honorable than an iron curtain.

Nixon promises "peace with honor." Where is honor to be found in the policy of Vietnamization? That policy turns whole stretches of Indochina into a technological hell. Which American citizens wish to lend their support to the American rain of fire on families and homes far away?

Nixon must be repudiated, even if he ends the war. His methods destroy what little morality or honor we still possess. He is not a symbol we wish to present as we face our fellow human beings.

The slow moral outrage so deeply burning like quiet coals in the American heart must not be allowed to flare up into temporary tongues of flame, in instant demonstrations. The vote given to eighteen-year-olds changes the rules of the game considerably.

Nixon characteristically receives 42 percent of the support of the American people. Allow George Wallace to divide the vote in 1972 once again; the likelihood is that the election of 1972 will, like Nixon's past performances, be decided by less than 500,000 votes.

The Non-voters

It is often noted that the vote of those below thirty tends to be more conservative than that of their elders. But commentators tend to overlook the fact that it is precisely those young people on the Left who tend to be so disaffected as not to vote. Those below thirty with whom "The Movement" is most in touch are those who ignore electoral politics.

"The Movement" is, however, losing both its moral superiority and its emotional hold. More and more young people do not want to be described as "young," or spoken of as part of another culture. Whereas there used to be moral clout in insisting on the coherence of "a generation," there is now distaste for being stereotyped. For the stereotype did not, after all, turn out to be entirely heroic, pure and intelligent.

If those who care about continuing the endless struggle for reconstruction in this society can persuade 500,000 or one million voters on the Left, who might otherwise not vote, to repudiate the image of Richard Nixon as an expression of our national life, new possibilities are thereby opened. Salvation will not come. No shining leader can make the millions of local decisions that, cumulatively, alter the structure of a society. But the character and intent of Presidential symbols touches all such decisions. If structural change is desired, Nixon's face and voice and intent don't express it. Nixon isn't the one.

To bring out one million new voters, thousands of acts must be accomplished in the next year. Registration laws in many states must be changed. (The government should have but does not now have, the re-

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sponsibility for registering every single voter. Each citizen is affected by the voting process. If Selective Service can keep track of every male over 18, voter registration can be universal and automatic.)

Colleges and universities should have the obligation of providing registration booths at the college library or some other facility; and also of providing a systematic procedure for ensuring that absentee balloting is regular, easy and encouraged. Registration units at factories and football games and neighborhoods could get young workers and their wives registered.

If every impulse of moral outrage in the next eighteen months does not go up in smoke but is channeled into concrete acts of political protest, a solid precedent will be established: the swift repudiation even of Presidents. The balloting system has not failed us; the people use scarcely a fraction of the power they already have. It is astonishing how many of America's politicians stay in power because they can depend on a personal organization and the indifference of the majority.

Richard Nixon deserves more than our indifference. What he stands for must be repudiated. He will be, if many contribute hard work, intelligence and political skill.

We need an organization to register and to bring to the polls one million new votes on the Left.

SITUATION ETHNICS

They have good reason to believe they are not in control of their own lives

PETER FREIBERG

Nobody has yet seen one of the people Msgr. Geno Baroni refers to as PIGS—Poles, Italians, Germans, Greeks and Slavs—parading under an "Ethnic Liberation" banner. It may, in fact, never happen. But, like the black, women's and other movements that emerged out of real oppression to fight for their self-interests, the new ethnic community organizations that have sprung up in a dozen cities are also seeking to liberate their members.

Trapped in poorly-paying jobs that provide little creative satisfaction, boxed into neighborhoods that once gave a sense of security and now feel like war zones, overburdened with taxes despite a paucity of government services and unable to prevent their sons from being sent to battle in a war they don't understand, the ethnics have good reason to believe they are not in control of their own lives. The burgeoning movement, because it is centered on the neighborhoods that are so important to the ethnics, has the potential for developing into a force demanding radical decentralization of government—a move that could end the powerlessness of blacks and whites alike. At the very least, the movement can become an alternative to the local and national George Wallaces who have attracted support from the 40 million predominantly Catholic ethnics of central and southern European extraction.

With financial and other help from the U.S. Catholic Conference's Task Force on Urban Problems, which Baroni heads, the American Jewish Committee and local Catholic and Protestant church groups, community organizations assuming a variety of forms have been started. Goals include such items as stopping an expressway, improving garbage collections, obtaining a day-care center and pressuring large corporations to end their polluting.

In Newark, Stephen Adubato, a 38-year-old former high school teacher, is attempting to train a cadre of 50 organizers who can build an organization strong enough to challenge the power of white militant Anthony Imperiale in the predominantly Italian North Ward. In Detroit, Catholic priests took the lead in setting up a Black-Polish Conference aimed at reducing racial tensions. In Baltimore, under the direction of Joseph McNeely, a 26-year-old Marianist brother, an umbrella Southeast Community Organization (SECO) composed of block associations, churches and local clubs is being established. In the Gary-Calumet industrial area of northern Indiana, 150 fraternal, civic and labor organizations formed the Calumet Community Congress with the active support of Lake County Roman Catholic Bishop Andrew Grutka. The initiative and encouragement of parish churches, which are often the major cohesive force in deteriorating ethnic neighborhoods, has been crucial in helping several of the organizations get off the ground.

The organizers of the new groups are a gutsy, dynamic bunch who in many cases were deeply involved in civil rights activities only a few years ago. When blacks withdrew into their own communities to decide their agendas, they advised sympathetic whites to do the same. But popular dogma said the ethnics were hopeless—they con-

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tained the most reactionary, racist population in the country. "A lot of us were convinced, even me," Adubato said, "to be an enemy of our own people." One Italian teacher in Newark, horrified at the extent of Wallace's support in the North Ward in 1968, said she thought until recently that maybe "they should all get killed in some kind of revolution." It sometimes took a traumatic personal experience to make the liberal, college-educated ethnics take a close look at why their communities felt as they did.

For five years, Adubato has led the North Ward Democratic Committee, an interracial group that fought both Imperiale and the corrupt machine run by former Mayor Hugh Addonizio. He shifted direction only last year after his 14-year-old son, echoing statements Adubato has heard from neighbors for years, said, "Dad, you're strictly for the niggers and spics. You always seem to understand them and you don't understand us." "I tell you," Adubato recalled, "that had an overwhelming effect on me. I said if my own son thinks I'm against him, imagine what everyone else thinks. Now obviously, whether they're right or wrong, there's something in my actions that doesn't even translate concern to them. So I decided I'm going to publicly state that I'm going to work for the interests of white people to give them an alternative to Imperiale."

Perhaps the toughest obstacles to creating community organizations like Newark's Dislocated Ethnic Whites (DEW) are the widespread apathy and defeatism, the feeling that the problems and the opposition are too overwhelming to be overcome. Despite their anger and fear, many ethnics seem unable to do anything except express their bitterness at the nearby expanding ghettos of the "colored." Rocking the boat, in their minds, would only make matters worse. Nor are blue-collar workers anxious to spend what little spare time and energy they have away from their homes and families.

Against these obstacles, there is the overwhelming impact of urban breakdown. The myriad of problems, which have been solved neither by traditional electoral politics nor the white militants, convince many residents to at least listen to the new groups. Baltimore's SECO found that union membership and a tradition of self-help made ethnics aware of the benefits that come from organizing. And the idea that militancy is necessary to upset the status quo has been accepted by increasing numbers of ethnics.

The new organizations insist their members are "secondary victims" of the system, not "victimizers." While agreeing that blacks deserve "top priority," ethnic spokesmen maintain that to ignore the white working class will only worsen the plight of the blacks. Most ethnics, fooled by government, foundation and business claims that a real attack has been launched on ghetto poverty, blame the blacks for the deprivation of white communities. The emerging leaders constantly emphasize that blacks are not at fault. As Barbara Mikulski, a former Baltimore social worker now deeply involved in SECO, puts it, "It's the same story of underprivileged groups vying with each other for the same little chunk of pie rather than talking of a whole new bakery."

The overall objective proposed by Baroni's Task Force and other ethnic groups has been the restructuring of national priorities. They point out that a revised tax structure, an end to extravagant military and space expenditures and other reforms would free huge amounts of funds for use by blacks and whites.

Leaders of the new groups do not attempt to minimize the racism pervasive in their communities; they simply note there is no evidence that it is more extensive than among other whites and that the focus must be on eliminating the conditions that produce it. They argue convincingly that simply hitting the ethnics over the head with evidence of their racism does not cure the disease. In the long run, these leaders envisage an interracial coalition to force a change in the nation's agenda. They predict it will be but social and economic issues rather than feelings of brotherhood that will bring such an alliance about. In the meantime, it is premature to talk about anything but organizing separately and cooperating when issues arise on which the interests of both groups converge.

White-Black Cooperation

One instance of such cooperation occurred in Baltimore, where SECO's mixed-ethnic constituency has joined with black neighborhoods in opposing an expressway that would bulldoze parts of black and white areas. Ethnic spokesmen say many white working-class and black demands will be similar because of the economic status and geography they share. But given the strong conservative streak among the ethnics and their far superior living conditions compared to the racial minorities, it is unlikely that the solutions proposed by the ethnics will be as radical as those emanating from the minorities. In the area of money, for example, blacks have learned the importance of gaining control over the way funds are spent in order to avoid irrelevant or harmful bureaucratically-decided programs. This lesson, in turn, has spurred the demand for control over the institutions—schools, police, hospitals—that govern the lives of ghetto residents. Few ethnics have yet reached the point where they will join the blacks in calling for community control.

There is good reason to believe, however, that a demand for drastically decentralizing political, educational and other institutions will be voiced by the ethnics as their powerlessness at the hands of planners, bureaucrats and political hacks becomes more obvious to them. Only recently in New York, Mayor John Lindsay's Administration attempted to destroy a close-knit Italian com-

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munity in Corona, Queens, to make way for a school that could easily be built on other sites. The plan was thwarted, largely because of the last-minute intervention of writer Jimmy Breslin, but what was painfully evident during the residents' long fight was their inability to make their opinions count in the decision-making process.

The very fact that the new groups are organized around neighborhoods will encourage their members to consider community government as a means of ensuring that their needs are met. Mikulski is already talking of the advantages of community control and decentralizing government to the "lowest possible unit," while Adubato and others say such demands will inevitably arise in their neighborhoods.

Just as the blacks helped persuade whites to "get it together" in their home communities, so the search for black history and culture sparked a new look at the ethnic heritage. Some ethnics, of course, have totally assimilated and many more have little knowledge or interest in their background. But it is clear that the pot has far from melted, and the new groups are heightening ethnic consciousness. This has its dangers, for it can lead to even greater provincialism than now exists, but overall it is a healthy and positive development. It can, as Baroni points out, increase interracial understanding: if the Irish know about the Molly McGuires

and where Bernadette Devlin is coming from, they might understand black militancy. When people study their "roots," as the blacks have begun to do, they find it easier to deal with others on a basis of mutual respect. The cultures that the ethnics come from also contain values, such as respect for craftsmanship, that can contribute to the development of a new American culture being sought by the nation's youth.

The history of community organizing in white working class communities offers little reason to think the ethnic movement will succeed in the face of prospective government opposition and community apathy. The new movement, however, is significantly different from past efforts by radical youths who came from outside the neighborhood. As Mikulski points out, "As long as I'm organizing for a population that I refer to as them, I don't have the same kind of feeling, urgency and commitment as when I'm working in a neighborhood where I say us, we, me, mine. See, if this movement doesn't work, I'm talking about my mother's and father's house, their grocery store, about people I know as human beings."

The new ethnic leaders are hopeful because they see a basic decency in their people; they criticize some liberals for believing the worst about the working class. At the core of the ethnic movement is the populist belief that if you give people the power to control their own affairs, they will, in the long run, make rational decisions for the common good.

The new movement has already come in for some criticism. The National Committee of Black Churchmen, which includes the National Catholic Black Clergy Caucus, believes the appeal to church and government to start paying attention to the ethnics falsely implies that the black and brown minorities have been given substantial help in the past. Since it is almost certain there will be no reordering of national priorities in the next few years, the newly-aroused ethnics will be competing with the minorities for scarce funds.

Some blacks and liberals fear the organizers will not be able to keep the movement on the positive course they have set. The fears are reinforced by the famous "success" of the Chicago Back-of-the-Yards project of organizer Saul Alinsky, whose ideas, and in some cases students, have influenced the ethnic movement: what was once a white Chicago slum has turned into a reasonably prosperous bastion of right-wing, anti-black conservatism.

Baroni and others have made impassioned statements that they will not indulge in fighting for "the same little chunk of pie" nor will they fail to combat white racism. But on the basis of past experience, blacks have little reason to have faith in the good intentions of whites. The answers to the criticisms will ultimately be in the ethnics' actions rather than their words.

Despite the uncertainties, the ethnic movement should be warmly welcomed as an ally in the struggle for institutional change. The movement recognizes a basic truth that radicals propounded in the early 1960s and then forgot: there is *no other way* to achieve such change and bring "power to the people" except through grassroots organization. It is possible, of course, that the new groups will accept token reforms that leave conditions essentially unaltered; but it is just as possible that they will become more radical, in the words of one Baltimore organizer, "as we start knocking our heads against City Hall."

In the battles to come, new coalitions and new values may develop that will make goals like integration feasible. Hopefully, the ethnic movement will succeed; with the Agnews and Imperiales waiting in the wings, we will all be in trouble if it fails.

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SOME HATE, SOME HOPE

The course of change in the Deep South

JERRY DeMUTH

Mississippi looks beautiful when entering it from Memphis. Interstate 55 is a straight stretch of freeway with rows of expanding pine trees along its sides, adding a green touch which provides a pleasant relief from the white ribbon of concrete. But the stretches of pine stop and then start again without apparent reason and at times—where the tree branches haven't filled out and joined together —one can see beyond the trees. There, along the fields of cotton and okra and soybeans, are rows of sharecropper shacks, makeshift, unpainted, weather-beaten structures that are still permanent homes for many black families—residences that the state of Mississippi went through great expense to hide from the eyes of travelers.

Like those trees, much of what has changed in Mississippi and the rest of the Deep South has been merely surface change. Nothing has happened to get really at the roots of inequality or deeply changed attitudes. Though some whites are honestly becoming concerned and involved with black problems, far more whites are segregating themselves from blacks in employment opportunities, housing and schools, while black distrust of whites is increasing.

Jobs in agriculture continue to disappear; new industry is small and generally hires only enough blacks, and then in lower positions, to give minimal compliance with equal employment requirements.

Public schools in many areas are all or predominantly black in enrollment, but black teachers and principals have even less of a role to play today. The boards and superintendents that control those schools are all white.

Blacks are registered to vote in large numbers but seldom do they have any political power or voice. Where they do, the resources needed to begin to meet problems are lacking. Black political power is weakened by having councilmen elected at large, school boards appointed by county boards, and so on.

Although white hostility — so apparent in the early 1960s—is still present, violence or even economic pressure seldom occurs. The White Citizens Councils, despite being strong in the area of private schools, don't have the top level influence they once had. And the Klan is almost nonexistent. "The Citizens Council has no power," said Selma's Rev. F. D. Reese, president of the Dallas County Voters League. "They're just here. A Klan is out of the question. The Klan needs fear to exist, and nobody's afraid now."

But black hostility is increasing. Yet it is mild and scant compared to the North and is found only in the larger cities. Elsewhere the generation that typically shows hostility—late teens through early 20s—is missing, having left the rural areas and small towns for the larger cities of the South or the North. Most black colleges, including Jackson State College where police killed two blacks, continue to have little activity aimed at solving racial and economic problems, despite the existence of black nationalist groups at such colleges as Tougaloo in Mississippi, which once was active in the civil rights movement.

"There's still some confidence placed in whites in black communities in rural areas," said Richard Polk, director of STAR, a job training program sponsored by the Mississippi Catholic diocese. "That can't be said in Jackson, Greenville, Greenwood, Biloxi and other larger towns."

"In 1964," said Charles Horwitz, a former civil rights worker who now is a Delta Ministry staff member, "when a white civil rights worker would go into a (black) bar, people would buy him a beer. It was like the liberation of Paris. In 1970, if a white stays long enough someone will pick a fight with him. The anti-white feeling," he added, "is tremendous among youths from 13 years up."

In Greenville, Miss., black youths have shot up white- and Chinese-owned groceries in the black community. In Starkville and West Point, Miss., blacks have organized self-defense groups. Last spring the group in West Point, the United Black Front, battled with a gang of whites. In August, in Aberdeen, Miss., front members shot at a group of whites—policemen, according to local blacks—who were shooting into a black home.

Whites, who once burned black churches, have focused on schools. Fifteen black schools which were to be integrated have been burned in Mississippi in the last year. In West Point a black community center was burned.

In Cleveland and Hattiesburg, Miss., black groups, patterned after the Black Panthers, preach self-defense and run free breakfast programs for school children. In Jackson, Miss., there's a black liberation school. Last spring a white woman, the wife of a local liberal attorney

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JERRY DE MUTH, *a Chicago newspaperman, recently completed a fact-finding swing through the South.*

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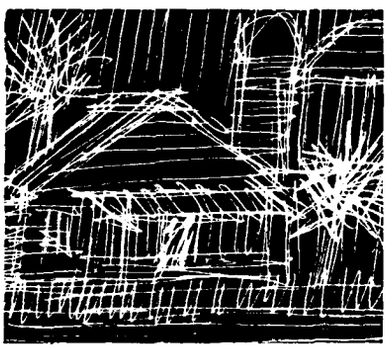
who has handled many civil rights cases, was beaten by black youths outside the school.

Blacks no longer simply want to vote or attend integrated schools. Demands and efforts are increasingly turning toward the economic and toward becoming part of the political and economic structure. "We want to control our own lives," said Rev. Charles Sherrod, head of New Communities, a program in Albany, Georgia, which seeks to develop farming, industry and housing on a 5,735--acre site it is purchasing. "We're asking for a share of the power."

But there is still some pressure on blacks who seek to improve themselves economically. In Fayette County, Tennessee, which borders on the Mississippi delta, county officials halted construction of a building for a black-run tool and die company. In Selma, the Southwest Alabama Farmers Cooperative Association still has trouble getting bids for supplies from local dealers and must go out of the area.

Some white pressure fails because of some small changes. "In Lee County (Miss.)," said STAR's Polk, "a white landowner tried to get the FHA to refuse a



loan to a black on his land because the black had registered to vote. But a new black employee at the local FHA office handled loan applications and the loan went through."

There also is some cooperation from whites. In Lowndes County, Alabama, a white citizen has leased land to local blacks for construction of a wooden industrial-pallet manufacturing plant that is being started under an American Friends Service Committee program. And white county officials have installed a needed culvert and have agreed to level the ground and pave a road at the site.

In Hancock County, Georgia, some whites have joined blacks in the operation of a 358-acre catfish farm. Director is Robert Lindsay, who left his catfish farm in Echo, Alabama, to help run the Georgia farm in Mayfield.

There is far less pressure today on whites who work with blacks than there was five years ago. And this writer, in a two-week trip through the South, encountered little hostility compared with similar trips in 1964 and 1965..

In Holmes County, Mississippi, a county that straddles the delta and hill country, a white woman works as a nurse in a black-run health program. She took the job because the hours and pay were better than at her previous job. "I wasn't any crusader," she explained. "Then I saw how bad conditions are in the black community and I became dedicated."

She got some hate mail and phone calls at first, she explained, but that has stopped, and her husband has never been threatened with losing his city job. "I could never have done this in 1964," she said. Many whites who did far less then were driven out of the state. "Whites accept things now," she commented. "They accept Clark (State Rep. Robert Clark, a black), saying he's only one in the whole legislature. Whites have asked Clark to do things for them. But they don't shout from the street corner, 'Clark did something for me.' Whites living and working in the black community are accepted by whites without them punishing the white or the blacks."

But generally deep attitudes haven't changed, as shown by Selma, where white officials dismiss the police violence against civil rights demonstrators that occurred in 1964 and 1965. "There were some heads that had to be knocked together," said W. McLean Pitts, who was Sheriff James Clark's attorney and now is the city attorney. "That's what we need today."

"In all the trouble," Pitts added, "we didn't have one person killed or seriously injured by the police."

"We had 90 days of peaceful demonstrations before the Pettus Bridge incident," insisted Selma's Mayor Joe T. Smitherman.

Younger whites, mainly those in college, have gone the farthest in reaching out to support blacks, but they are still an outcast minority. "Very few of the white kids used to go to college," said a white businessman in predominantly black Haywood County, Tenn., one of the four poorest counties in the country. "Now at least 50 per cent go to college. They will change their attitudes now."

In Selma, Steve Smitherman, the mayor's 20-year-old son, commented, "People in Selma have changed. Whites from 16 to 25 have become more liberal. People call them hippies but they aren't." Such youths, rather than blacks, are now the hate object of the town's conservatives, according to the young Smitherman.

"In Jackson, Hattiesburg, Gulfport, Starkville, white youths are moving," said the Delta Ministry's Horwitz. "Whites joined blacks at Mississippi Southern University in a march to President McCain's office, asking the school to close because of the Jackson State shootings. Some 50 whites joined blacks in front of Alexander Hall at Jackson State and faced down some workmen who were coming to remove the windows that had been shot up. That wouldn't have happened a while back. Also here in Jackson, white kids passed out leaflets in white

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neighborhoods backing the garbage strike."

According to STAR's Polk, blacks have lost faith in federal action. "There was a time when the HEW staff in the delta was advising schools how to avoid complying with desegregation guidelines," he said. "The schools build new facilities with Title I money and then don't comply. The funds are cut off but they already have the facilities."

It takes 90 days to file a complaint involving violation of equal employment laws, he said, and then as long as two years before the complaint is investigated. "We have trouble getting people to tell their stories to federal investigators," Polk continued. "They've told their stories repeatedly and nothing has been done and they don't want to tell them again. Maybe that's why people think things are better."

Polk said that the hiring of blacks is kept at a minimum with little chance of advancement. But even if practiced fully, he pointed out, equal employment means little, given the inferior education blacks have received. "Things haven't changed that much," he repeated. "The same things are going on. There's just been a difference in approach in handling things. I'm looking for a change in the hearts and minds of men."

He said that although such a change has occasionally occurred, it has involved only a few persons—such as the white woman in Holmes County or a white woman and former sheriff in Leake County who are now helping black efforts. "That's the change that has to take place," he said, "but it's happening too slow. It will take longer than we have time for a complete change to come about."

WRETCHED OF THE EARTH

THE SCREEN

Ramparts of Clay began to be an interesting film long before the camera magazines had been loaded. The film is based on a book sociologist Jean Duvignaud wrote about a Tunisian village called Chebika. But because the Tunisian government objected to Duvignaud's research, permission to make the film where its story actually occurred was refused. The shooting location had to be switched to Tehouda, Algeria, and the people of Tehouda were asked to play the Chebikans. Even during the pre-production stages, in other words, the film was turning into a highly paradoxical project. It was going to be some kind of make-believe documentary.

The change of location might not have mattered, though, for the interest director Jean-Louis Bertucelli originally took in the project was ideological, not ethnographical. In adapting his book, Duvignaud had already bent the facts a bit in order to accommodate Bertucelli's interests. The climactic episode in both film and book is a strike staged by the village men. But in Chebika the strike was against government attempts to allocate the village's resources. In the film the strike is against the capitalist wage system. The scenario's version has been written as a prefiguring of the transition from neo-colonial home rule to true socialist independence: the film episode would illustrate Fanon's teaching that "the bourgeois phase of third-world history is a completely useless phase."

Yet the change of location *has* mattered in the making of the film because of the way Bertucelli coped with that change. He decided to use his script as a mere premise, and to let the people of Tehouda work out the consequences in their own minds. As he explains it, "We just 'induced' some events and *saw* them, without influencing their course. Inside of this reality the inhabitants were free, which compelled us to film them as we would news coverage." The result is that Bertucelli hasn't led his actors into the post-bourgeois future as he expected: they've led him back to the pre-bourgeois past. The film shows us something quite durable and beautiful about a primitive way of life—something Bertucelli himself doesn't seem to have discovered until after he arrived in Tehouda.

The feeling that we're watching an act of discovery is what makes the film visually exciting. The life that goes on behind the ramparts doesn't turn out to be so simple or defenseless that a political theory will sweep it aside. Despite the film's title, the ramparts are of stone. And the more impregnable they looked, the more fascinated with them Bertucelli became. Throughout the film, shots track along the eroded village walls, as if he supposed the integrity of these people would somehow be revealed by the very setting in which they live. Every feature of the location is examined in a prolonged close-up, and every Berber song or prayer is recorded on the sound-track. The film becomes preoccupied with the spirit of the place because Bertucelli realized that the spirit of the people is autochthonous.

The strike provides a final contest between the film's political scenario and its primitive cast. A rebellious girl named Rima, who didn't figure in the strike at Chebika, is made into the heroine of the film's strike. That Rima is one of the script's impositions on the film can't be doubted, for Leila Schenna, the film's only professional actress, plays the part of Rima. Rima outwits the soldiers sent to suppress the strike; but afterwards, when she turns her defiance against the village itself, the other village women outwit her. The women of Tehouda improvise a way to humiliate the exemplary role that the script would have had Rima play in the film. Ideology is undone by superstition.

The film's final shot is made from a helicopter as Rima runs across the desert floor below. As the helicopter gains altitude, she become almost indistinguish-

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able from the surrounding terrain: it is as if the landscape in which she lives has reclaimed her for its own. That Bertucelli was willing to let her be reclaimed this way—not only here, but in the film as a whole—says much for his honesty as an artist. Duvignaud still claims that in making the film he and Bertucelli taught the people of Tehouda something liberating. But for Bertucelli things have clearly turned out the other way around. From the prophecies of Fanon he has arrived at the wisdom of Claude Lévi-Strauss, the great French anthropologist who speaks of himself as a "pupil" of the primitive people he studies.

* * *

Barbara Loden's *Wanda* might be thought of as the sequel to *Ramparts of Clay*, the second feature on a double bill produced by historical circumstances. Wanda and Rima are sisters in several respects. For instance, the men in Wanda's world are coal miners while the men of Tehouda are salt cutters. Both live by scraping minerals from the earth, and only a few tools create the illusion that the former are more advanced than the latter. A millennium of development separates the primitive society in Bertucelli's film from the industrial one in Miss Loden's. But in some ways nothing has changed, and in other ways many things—too many—have changed for the worse.

The trash and slag heaps of western Pennsylvania are the landscape in which *Wanda* is set. It's a landscape as desolate as Tehouda's, but hardly as pristine and beautiful. No matter how much we imagine Rima hated the sight of sand and barren mountains, it's inconceivable that they could seem to anyone so alien and inhuman as the despoiled mining region in *Wanda*. In a sense *Wanda*'s characters, like the people of Tehouda, have an autochthonous relationship with the area where they live. As played by Miss Loden, Wanda seems the scrawny, vitiated flower that could grow only in this coal dust amidst these gouged-out hills.

But in a more important sense, like anyone in an urbanized, technological environment, Wanda is an autonomous character. When Miss Loden first wrote the script, she planned to film it in Louisiana instead of Pennsylvania. But in this film it's inconceivable that the change of location mattered very much. Through most of the film Wanda travels with a witless felon named Norman Dennis (Michael Higgins). Where they go makes no difference to them, or us, because all the hamburger joints and flop-house rooms look alike.

Wanda feels the autonomy of her existence as sheer loneliness. The film has almost as little dialogue in it as *Ramparts of Clay*. In Bertucelli's film this is because people can make themselves understood through decorum and gesture that don't require speech. In *Wanda* there are no social forms of this sort to mitigate the silence. Wanda's whole life is an attempt to avoid the despair of having no one to talk to and nothing to say. But even this man whose bed and crimes she shares remains "Mr. Dennis" to her. Her life really is too ludicrous, too pathetic, for words.

Although *Wanda* is extraordinary, it's not as fine a film as *Ramparts of Clay*. The brilliance of Bertucelli's film lies in its self-contradictions. Conflict exists in it not only among the characters, but within the director as well. Miss Loden's attitudes are more ready-made: she found the lives of her characters as irreparably empty as she expected she would. This doesn't mean her conception of them isn't accurate, or her compassion for them isn't genuine. It simply means that the drama of her film is less involved, and the film itself is therefore less affecting. COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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SR. ELLEN MURPHY

Fireflies:

A Poem for William of Ghana

How, in the Fanti tongue
are the fireflies named?

When I described them in my letter
you replied
as directly as in a poem
that word of their vague nebulae
beyond my windowed walls in Illinois
kindled this memory:

Nets spread among night-green vines
in the grasslands of Ghana
where you, a child,
caught their cold fire in your hands
seeking their light's source.

What name did you call them?

● ● ● ● ● ● ●

OTHELIA LILLY

EVERYWOMAN AFTER EVERY WAR

I met a woman bumping down the street:
she walked upon her head; she held her feet
high with a hood upon them as she spoke
of homes around the world, a giddy joke.
To chat with her, I stood upon my head
and limped along with thoughts so near the dead
I tasted mold, inhaled the upside down
stench of the world and felt it was my crown.
In a plumeless hat, my feet conversed with hers,
exchanging thoughtless nods of wanderers.

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VOCATION IN THE DESERT

Lawrence of Arabia and Charles de Foucauld

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

The desert offers its own kind of vocation. Like the sea, its endless waves of sand can serve as a mirror—a mirror for Fate, or a mirror for the Soul. That perhaps is the reason why two such different men as Charles de Foucauld and T. E. Lawrence sought their salvation there. Both were born explorers and both possessed that personal magnetism which singles out the leader of men; but they differed in one important respect. The life of Foucauld follows the traditional pattern of the Christian Hero, whereas Lawrence resembles that of the Classical Hero of antiquity.

In *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom,* Lawrence attempted to find in his life a meaning; to explain that the outcome of his desert adventures could only be a fantastic dream to those who saw their beginnings "as an ordinary effort." Was this to imply that he was a man set apart, that from the outset he had been marked for a special destiny? Certainly he held that all his actions resulted from the promptings of Fate—and I use the word Fate rather than Providence because Providence suggests a personal Godhead, whilst Fate, on the other hand, suggests the classical past. In Lawrence's restless career, you have a picture of a modern man subject to the Furies.

In *Moroccan Reconnaissance,* Foucauld wrote a classic which is still used as a manual of instruction in French staff-colleges. There is one observation which I should like to single out from it. "The sight of the Moslem faith, of these souls living in the continual presence of God, gave me a glimpse of something bigger and more real than worldly preoccupations." This is a key passage.

As a boy and as a youth, Foucauld had been vain and egotistical; at school and at the military academy of St-Cyr, he had been idle. His life as an officer was described by contemporaries as a continual movement between cavalry exercises in the morning, and champagne and mistresses at night. Yet many of those contemporaries later admitted that from their first acquaintance with him they were aware of hidden reserves. Those reserves were shown by his Moroccan expedition, when disguised as a rabbi and armed only with his compass and sextant, he set off with a Jewish companion to explore territory forbidden to Christians. And what roles that sextant had to play! Sometimes it served as a means of reading the sky, sometimes the future; in Taza it was an instrument against the plague, in Tadla it revealed the sins of the Chosen People; by day it could predict the weather; by night —and when no one was looking—it took those bearings which were to provide Europeans with nearly fifteen hundred square miles of newly mapped territory.

Thirty years later, in 1916, wearing a white Arab robe with a crimson cross stitched upon it, he was assassinated by the fanatics of a desert tribe. At that moment it seemed that his only legacy would be the two big volumes of Moroccan travels, two volumes of translated Toureg prose and poetry, and a Toureg grammar and dictionary. In one of his last letters, written to a cousin in France, he said: "Tomorrow it will be ten years since I first said Mass at Tamanrasset, and not a single conversion." Yet his influence has grown and continues to grow.

By 1933 over a dozen biographies of him had appeared, and that year saw the foundation of the religious community he had planned—the Little Brothers of Jesus. The members of this rapidly expanding Catholic community live in small fraternities of three, four, or five members, following the ideal set by Father de Foucauld. In T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion,* there are some lines which indirectly refer to them—lines that were prompted by the poet's reading of René Bazin's *Life of Charles de Foucauld:*

> The worship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation,
> A stony sanctuary and a primitive altar,
> The heat of the sun and the icy vigil,
> A care over lives of humble people
> The lesson of ignorance, of incurable diseases.

I have quoted this passage because I want to destroy any illusion that either Foucauld and his successors—or Lawrence and his followers—were attracted by a technicolor vision of the desert with bedouins charging by on camels and tents pitched beside the palm-trees of an oasis. No, what they both sought in the desert was their inner selves.

Once as a student at Oxford, Lawrence sat up all night with friends discussing the ideal existence. He decided that Christ had lived the most perfect life and that he would model his own upon it. (In fact one of his brothers did become a missionary in China.) The desert had been the homestead of three of the world's greatest religions —Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—

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and the Arabs called it the Garden of Allah because, lost in its dunes, a man could be really alone with his Creator. That sense of aloneness lured Lawrence, since the bedouin, like the hermit, fights for his life single-handed. His communities consist of groups of 10 to 15 tents. Wealthy by his own standards today, tomorrow he may be left without a single foal by a raiding-party. Then comes the moment when he recaptures what he had lost 10 or 15 weeks—or months or even years—before. The raid is the sole industry the desert knows—and a raid is always a gamble. It may sound far-fetched to describe a bedouin's life in the terms of that of a broker on the stock exchange, yet it is precisely in those terms that the late Gertrude Bell wrote of the desert-dwellers.

Foucauld was a gambler. He hoped to win converts and, if in his years at Tamanrasset his score was nil, he remained optimistic to the end. The odds were 70 to 80 years against eternity. In taking his own God down to places where "He had never been before corporeally," he could not know what might be the effect in 10 or 15 years—although it would not matter if the years were decades or even centuries. He was alone with God in the desert, eternity was on his side, and the sands of time did not run out.

Lawrence was also a gambler. He wanted an army "without gesture or parade" and he found it in the Arab revolt against the Turks. His cause was freedom, "the second of Man's creeds," as he called it. It was a cause so ravenous that it devoured all his strength, a hope so transcendent that it made all other ambitions fade. "Willy-nilly it became faith." Those are his own words, his equation between faith and freedom. Yet freedom, however great as an ideal, never can be raised to a position higher than "the second of Man's creeds." The desert could provide an escape, but an escape limited by time. It was as if the Furies pursued and Fate stood over him, as it had over Oedipus, echoing the same warning:

Then learn that mortal man must
always look to his ending,
And none can be called happy
until that day when he carries
His happiness down to the grave
in peace . . .

Lawrence's world was like that of Sophocles; it was a world without knowledge of the Incarnation. He might be described as a liberal rationalist. Christ's life, Lawrence saw, as an ideal life because it was the life of a Hero; his death by crucifixion

left a shadow—like the death of all other heroes. But for Foucauld that shadow was a ray of sunlight. Sunlight needs shadow, and the better one understands Lawrence the better one can understand Foucauld. The Classical Hero not only precedes the Christian Hero in time, but also helps to explain him.

Once Lawrence had left the desert he became restless; he joined the Air Force, then the Army. In the barrack-room he sought monastic seclusion, just as in Tamanrasset during the last months Foucauld had to make his hermitage into a fort. "He remained very much a soldier under a monk's habit," said one who met him. Or, as he himself commented: "There's nothing new under the sun. I think, when I look at the battlements of my hermitage, of the convents and the fortified churches of the Middle Ages: How the ancient things return, and how that which one thought gone forever reappears!"

Lawrence, too, had a habit of looking back. As a young man he had been obsessed with the Crusader castles of the Middle Ages and had written a thesis on them. Again, a good part of his later life was spent in looking back upon the Arab revolt and in immortalizing it in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. How brilliantly he succeeded, yet what a sad shadow that classic casts! What hopes were betrayed, what freedoms lost!

Speaking of Lawrence, I quoted from the ancient Greek poet, Sophocles. Earlier, speaking of Foucauld, I quoted from the modern Christian poet, T. S. Eliot. Perhaps I may now introduce a text from an Old Testament Hebrew singer: "The desert shall rejoice, and blossom like a rose." Indeed, under gun-fire it does blossom. That was an experience common to many soldiers in the Second World War as it was to Lawrence's followers in the First. In another sense the Little Brothers of Jesus also make the vast wastes of the Sahara blossom. "One must pass through the Desert to receive the grace of God . . . because there one empties oneself." That advice of a Trappist friend of Foucauld's had a literal and a symbolic meaning for the hermit of Tamanrasset. For he had learnt that revelation is a waiting. But Lawrence could not wait; he grew impatient. The vast wastes had taught him to empty himself, but the gap that the freedom of a Bedouin's life brought him was too terrifying to contemplate. In the mirror of the desert he found that he, the pursuer, became the pursued. There was no escape from Fate—save in the excitement of speed. He died in a motorcycle crash. It was the violent end to which all his life had led, just as Foucauld's assassination was the fulfillment of what always had been a secret wish: "Think that you must die a martyr, stripped of everything—and wish it were today."

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE *is a British critic and journalist.*

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HAROLD ISBELL

FOR DAVID, GOING TO BED

My son turns himself out
of his shirt like a snake
putting off his skin.
A twist and his body
stands in the sunlight free.

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BOOKS

A five-foot shelf for Women's Lib

Voices of the New Feminism

MARY LOU THOMPSON, EDIT.

Beacon, $5.95

The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution

SHULAMITH FIRESTONE

Morrow, $6.95

Patriarchal Attitudes

EVA FIGES

Stein and Day, $6.95

Sisterhood is Powerful

ROBIN MORGAN, EDIT.

Random House, $8.95

KATHY MULHERIN

The flood of authoritative books on the Question of the Year—Women's Liberation—has begun. If you browse in a bookstore you'll see that nearly all of them are awful, just awful. But there are a very few which can be useful to women in thinking about our experience. Each of the four books here is at least related to the real conditions of women and is worth looking into. But each has its own hazards.

Voices of the New Feminism is largely a survey of the ways in which different institutions discriminate against women. The articles are written by professional women well-known in their fields. The general emphasis of the book is on the civil rights of women, except for a few articles which speculate vaguely and abstractly on agreeable sounding solutions to our problems.

Most of us have more urgent and concrete matters on our minds than our civil rights, and the business of goals and solutions is very serious and must be firmly based on a thorough analysis of our daily experience and our present needs and desires.

Although it contains some statistics verifying discrimination against women, very little of the book is directly related to anyone's ordinary life. It's the sort of book someone might read who wishes to be intelligent at a dinner party on the subject of women's liberation. But for women such conversations are a terrible strain, and for men they are an opportunity for displays of their power to control the terms. If somebody tells you he or she read this book and liked it, try to change the subject.

The Dialectic of Sex is very interesting and well worth reading, but it is extraordinarily uneven. There are a couple of chapters worth the price of the book, and several so bad they not only wasted my time, they made me frustrated and irritable.

Essentially the book argues that the first and fundamental source of human conflict is based on the power relations between the sexes. The author's first premise is that the basic form of social organization is a system of male supremacy, a sexual class system. She argues that Marxism and Freudianism—the two most thorough and systematic attempts to explain human relations—are incomplete and/or full of contradictions because they don't go to the root of the problem. She devotes much of the book to an occasionally illuminating but often pretentious and academic elaboration of a theory of feminism incorporating and resolving Marxism and Freudianism.

Her method is that used by Marx and Freud: detailed observation and analysis of ordinary experience. And when she speaks directly and simply of the experience of women she is imaginative and powerful. The chapter on love is really wonderful. Love, she says, is a condition of mutual vulnerability. Since the relations between men and women are unequal because men have power over women, the only time they even approach equality is when they are falling in love, and the man is so vulnerable, so exposed to the woman that she does have a kind of equality with him. But as everybody knows, the romance is soon over and the power relations reassert themselves. Love soon becomes conditioned by such factors as the woman becoming economically dependent on the man, for example, or any number of such indications of their unequal positions in the world.

There is a very penetrating and lucid subsection called "Why men can't love." The whole chapter is orderly and straightforward, perhaps a good thing to give to a man if you have one you're trying to educate.

A chapter on the history of American feminism is useful; and there is also a good one on childhood. They are intelligent and free of jargon, but the latter does have one serious failing. It is a forceful attack on the way our society raises children, but whenever she gives an example, she takes on a moralistic tone, as if individuals who *knew better* could raise their kids correctly. It is wrong as well as cruel to make people feel that by their individual efforts they could rise above or step outside the culture they belong to. There are hundreds of such books on the market already, and together with all the claptrap in the media about how the generation gap is the fault of parents who raised their kids improperly, they constitute a vicious and pervasive assault on American adults. It is muddled thinking at best, and the guilt it imposes on mothers is oppressive, so it is no small criticism to make of a book which claims to be a serious feminist analysis.

Evidently Miss Firestone thinks of her chapter of Freudianism as a major contribution to the field of psychology and psycho-analysis, and God knows they need major contributions, but I

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found it a bore. It might be useful to women who are seeing psychiatrists and want to find out something about what they are up to.

The chapter on racism is more of the same, only worse because it is also somewhat racist in its presumption that white people are qualified to speculate and theorize about the experience of black men and women. She spins out an extraordinarily elaborate theory based almost entirely on Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*, using a lot of psychological jargon. The interrelationship between black women, black men, white women and white men will have to be understood by a very concrete analysis of the interests of each and the real power relations among them. It is an enterprise which is hardly begun; it would have been better to acknowledge that fact and leave it at that for the time being.

I heard through the grapevine that the book was thrown together in a big hurry, which is all right—most books are—but this one could have been much shorter, perhaps a third.

Miss Firestone is aiming for recognition as a major theoretician of the women's movement, and she has made some profound and imaginative contributions. But her book reflects the racist and middle-class (intellectual) character of the current women's movement, and her pretensions are irritating.

Patriarchal Attitudes is a much less ambitious effort. It is an enlightening, entertaining and sensible historical survey of male supremacy. Eva Figes discusses both the real conditions of women through the ages, and also the ideologies (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Romanticism, Puritanism, Freudianism) that justified those conditions. It is a convincing description of how all kinds of widely differing economic and social systems have been carefully organized by men to preserve their power over women.

The book is full of very interesting observations. She shows, for example, how taboos and social customs have largely replaced physical force in controlling women. If a woman acts out of role today, she is more likely to be punished by various forms of social disapproval than by direct use of force. They are powerful forms, affecting her very livelihood, and they work effectively.

Miss Figes shows also that men, recognizing sex as the main area in which they are vulnerable to women (that is, sex is the main leverage a woman has with a man) have created all sorts of rules designed to protect themselves. That's how she explains taboos against adultery, the double standard, dividing women according to their sexual functions—idealizing some women and using others, like whores, for sex alone. She argues that the whole notion of sex in our culture as something unclean or base is an effort on the part of men to lessen the power of women in an area where men really need them.

My main criticism of the book is that the end does not live up to the rest. She ends up talking about the bad "habits" that the institution of marriage supports, but throughout she has always accepted that the relations between men and women are determined by the power of men and the powerlessness of women. She'd have done better to conclude by admitting that she didn't have any good ideas about how to change power relations. As it is the last chapter is muddled and empty. All the same it really is a good book.

Sisterhood is Powerful is a large collection of writing that has come out of the women's movement during the last few years. The book is out in paperback, so it's worth getting, though it might not be worth buying the hardback. Like all anthologies it is uneven, though in this case its very unevenness is interesting, since the book is a fairly accurate reflection of the women's movement itself.

The collection is full of very good personal testimonies of women's experiences and concrete political analysis of that experience. I mean something very specific by the term political analysis. A small example: in the course of an article by Beverly Jones on marriage and motherhood (part of an important and influential paper written by women in the Gainesville, Florida, movement) she analyzes that small, common American ritual: the husband reading the newspaper at breakfast before he goes to work. She knows concretely how it illustrates the power relations between a man and his wife.

The political analysis of the oppression of women which has come out of the women's movement in the last three or four years is born of careful observation, study, comparison and discussion of thousands of such details of the ordinary daily lives of women. The best details in this book are those which stick most closely to this method.

The book is handy also because it brings together a number of the best and most widely read theoretical/practical papers in the movement, like the Beverly Jones piece, or Naomi Weisstein's "Kinder, Küche, Kirche" or Irene Peslakis' "Resistances to Consciousness."

It has a section of poems, songs and chants, a collection of recent historical documents, and an appendix with some useful information.

The worst aspects of the book can't really be helped; they are also the worst aspects of the women's liberation movement. It is heavily weighted toward the white middle-class woman, which means that if it tells you a lot about the reality of women's oppression, there is more, very very much more of that reality (in structure and detail) it doesn't tell you. So it is misleading.

When the book does attempt to widen its scope, the results are dubious. For example, there is one article on women working in factories, written by a woman from the Left who is better known as a sensitive reporter and poet working for an underground newspaper in Boston) who spent five weeks at two different factories. Her article is a tourist's view of the life of women factory workers. It is unavoidably condescending and superficial. It would have been better not to attempt to "cover" the experience of such women.

The black section, too, though it contains articles by black women, is similarly limited. It seems to me that the women's movement has hardly begun to deal with racism, and token gestures like getting some black women to write

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essays for a predominantly white audience aren't much use. In fact, it leads to a kind of racist voyeurism.

Let me explain. The black section contains articles by black women essentially outlining their strategies for survival. White women can read and react with sympathy to the difficulties of black women. "Those black women really have it bad." But as long as white middle-class women view their own lives as different from that—as something other than their own best strategy for survival—their relationship to other women can only be that of voyeur. If we see ourselves as behaving *morally* as opposed to *strategically*, if we pretend that we aren't acting at all times to protect our interests, we can only have a condescending attitude toward women whose strategies may be more obvious than our own.

Many articles in *Sisterhood is Powerful* reflect what might be called this women's liberation morality. For example, there is a story by a secretary who got into women's liberation and was inspired, she says, to pass a "signed" petition around the office which spoke of discrimination against women and made some modest demand having to do with the ladies room. She was fired within half an hour. She described it as a liberating experience (she meant briefly exhilarating). But she was top secretary for the editor-in-chief of a major women's magazine and said she could get another job whenever she wanted. Most women can't afford to risk losing whatever they have in the way of jobs or husband or boyfriends. That is, they are pursuing a carefully constructed strategy for survival. Survival. All women have such strategies, but some are sufficiently privileged economically and socially (that is, they have a few more options than most women) to be able to avoid facing it.

The women's liberation movement is responsible, thereby, for calling upon women to rise up against their oppression without proposing a strategy—*detailed, precise, calculated*—for winning. It is responsible for demanding that women take risks they can ill afford without offering anything but vague promises of sisterly solidarity.

Most women in America have good sense. They know they are oppressed. They know what they need. They need love, intimacy, passion; they need security and support—emotional, economic and social. They aren't about to risk what little they have of those things for vague promises. That is why the women's liberation movement is relatively small and dominated by white middle-class women.

Robin Morgan's book—from her self-important introduction to the range and variety of its selections—is representative of the women's liberation movement. It has a lot of good, interesting and useful information, but watch out for the lies.

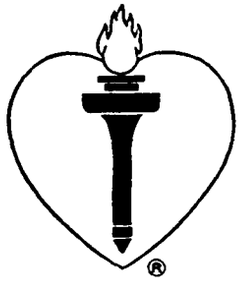
Your Heart Fund Fights

HEART ATTACK

STROKE

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

INBORN HEART DEFECTS



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REVIEWERS

KATHY MULHERIN, active in anti-war-G.I. organizing projects as well as women's lib, is working on a book.

LINDA KUEHL is a free-lance writer and critic living in New York.

T. PATRICK BURKE is a member of the Religious Studies Department at Temple University.

Dance the Eagle to Sleep

MARGE PIERCY

Doubleday, $5.95

LINDA KUEHL

Why do almost no New Left revolutionists write novels? Is the novel—in their eyes—a conservative form, only relevant these days for Old Left social realism or old-fashioned journalese or escapist surrealism? Probably it's because Movement people prefer group action to the sustained isolation required to work through two or three hundred pages of prose and so choose the shorter route—poetry—conceived and wrought in a flash and shared communally with a live audience.

Whatever the reasons, Marge Piercy is an anomaly as a former SDS member who writes activist fiction with the poet's personal intensity and the intellectual's rationality. Caught between political zeal and art, however, she is forced to confront the old problems of how you reconcile militant puritanism with creative integrity, how you remain committed to the Cause without being didactic, how you present the whole picture without appearing reactionary. Robbe-Grillet avoided these pressures by acknowledging the Revolution while he was away from the typewriter, and saying, lay off, I'm not your man, once he sat down to write. ("The artist puts nothing above his work.") Marge Piercy has not been reconciled and her novels—though not her poetry—reflect a divided loyalty.

Poetry after all is her métier by gift and temperament. In its tow she lets experience wash over her and take shape through imagination. Except for a handful of verse in her two collections, *Breaking Camp* and *Hard Loving*, she shuns explicit statement, exhortation, and ego-expanding bravado. She's obliquely political so far as anything she writes is *ipso facto* political so outrage and cry for change find form

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implicitly through imagery and metaphor. Hunger becomes the cats of Greece with "eyes grey as plague. . . . Their moonpale cries/hurl themselves/against your full spoon." The polluted city *is* Manhattan Bridge where "soiled newspapers lift and close/like swimmers going down/East River stinks/My shut eyes see green suns/more potent than/that oily drop/sliding under the towers."

But Piercy's novels reflect an impulse divided between politics and art. *Going Down Fast* is based, I believe, upon the South Side urban renewal crisis that shook the University of Chicago in the early Sixties. It dramatizes the racial tension and eventual conversion of liberals to militancy, focusing upon the coming-to-consciousness of Rowley, a brooding solipsist. In the final chapter, Rowley tells his buddy: "I can't fool myself anymore that I haven't been fucked by the system too. Shaped, channeled, mutilated, dehumanized, squeezed by the balls. And I can't see myself happy as a concerned honky." A little later, the narrator adds, "All his life he had been dodging. He had opted for comfort. Now he has planted his feet and from this point must begin." *Who* must begin? Self-indulgent, apathetic Rowley? No. Rowley's not going out to sell the Faith, the author is. Yet the trouble here isn't this *dea ex machina* but Piercy's social realism. An incipient Movement story simply cannot be told in a style smacking of the Thirties. The characters portrayed in that sprawling psychological Harvey Swados manner must inevitably appear Old rather than potentially New Left; the flavor of that decade, though wonderfully captured, must end up being anachronistic.

Piercy's second novel, *Dance the Eagle to Sleep*, is not anachronistic because she gives it a quasi-futurist, semi-fantasist quality and narrates from the point of view of street children "getting their heads together" in Indian-like tribes. Their experiences to some extent mirror the rise and fall of SDS. In the beginning, Corey, a dark, skinny, saintly real Indian organizes a central commune in New Jersey where his followers can escape the Nineteenth Year of Servitude and other forms of teenage enslavement. They dress plain and comfortable, do their own farming, produce their own secret formula drug called "bread," find sexual and artistic release through ritualistic nude dancing, and govern themselves through tribal councils.

Eventually their commune breaks up when the "pigs" raid and shell, though seeds for destruction have long since been sown from within. Hence the blatant SDS parallel:

> Though their survival depended on building as big a base as possible, kids tended to become quickly uncomfortable with people outside the movement and not to want to deal with them. Their *jargon and slogans isolated them.* It was a drag to talk to people who did not share your assumptions. . . . Older Indians often showed their contempt for new recruits. . . . Councils tended to turn into sharp debates now between different sides gathered around leaders who could argue and put others down. . . . There was fear everyplace. There was reason for fear everyplace. Wherever they went, they heard stories of arrests and beatings and raids and imprisonment. (Italics mine.)

Justified paranoia turns inward. The scientist-warrior faction led by Billy exploits fear and insularity and triumphs over Corey—self-sacrificing, conciliatory leader—and Shawn—artist-rock singer.

Former SDS members and sympathizers have found Piercy's fictionalization less apocalyptic than critics outside the Movement. They particularly note the ending where Shawn and Marcus join Ginny and her just-born baby after the holocaust to begin an unpossessive communal family. Outside critics, on the other hand, have called the novel brutal. Elizabeth Hardwick has charged "moral numbness and indifference to pain," a criticism which I —an outsider —cannot disagree with more. The murder of a traitor—Hardwick's instance of brutality—is not the orgiastic outlet that renders sex supererogatory. Rather it's horrific and debasing, forced upon the pacifists by the warriors, leaving them too self-loathing for making love. As for sex being sadistic, I rather see Joanna and Corey's birdlike cohabitations, Billy and Ginny's fumblings and Shawn's exhibitionistic preludes as tame and naive. Characters do use each other sexually, but strive, under the author's guidance, for mutual enjoyment and respect. They don't achieve it, but they strive.

Hardwick confuses Piercy's point of view with that of her street children. While the author has taken great pains to present objectively both the militant and pacifist sides, her repulsion for the scientist-warrior temperament breaks through as does her trust in humanism, art and light. Yet the critic's confusion is not entirely unjustified since Piercy herself is confused—trapped between political dedication and the dictates of writing an honest novel. Facile mouthings get the better of her, clichés like "the system's responsible," which obtrude as *raisons d'être* for the Cause. She herself loathes jargon and sloganeering but hasn't found *how* to make the words of characters independent of herself. She can't resist teaching, clarifying and explaining. And she faces the problem of using actual events—*e.g.*, the Chicago urban renewal crisis, the direct SDS parallel—which confine imagination.

Which brings me back to Robbe-Grillet's eloquent plea for taking the novel out of the political arena. Commitment, he wrote, "is, for the writer, the full awareness of the present problems of his own language, the conviction of their extreme importance, the

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desire to solve them *from within*. Here, for him, is the only chance of remaining an artist and, doubtless too by means of an obscure and remote consequence, of some day serving something —perhaps even the Revolution." Because Marge Piercy brings to fiction an area of Movement experience and activism that no one else to my knowledge has brought, she is unique. But if she is to write serious fiction, she will have to choose between description and proscription, creativity and didacticism, art and politics. She will have to experiment with styles and techniques more intrinsic to what she depicts—means truer to her critical intelligence and closer to her poetic impulse and language. If she stops consciously serving the Revolution while she is at the typewriter, she may find that "by means of an obscure and remote consequence" she will have served it in the end after all.

God in the Dock

C. S. LEWIS

Eerdmans, $6.95

T. PATRICK BURKE

In Disneyland, as I remember, there is a train which takes you on a fascinating and spectacular trip and then leaves you off precisely at the spot where you got on. You have made a journey through a world of ingenuity, and when you are finished your position is no further advanced than when you started. That train-ride might be taken as a parable for much of what passes for scholarship in theology and philosophy, though the ride is not often as enjoyable as Mr. Disney's. It is difficult, of course, to make philosophical and theological subjects as interesting as pirates and prehistoric monsters.

C. S. Lewis, by contrast, takes us on a journey which is thoroughly entrancing. It is a journey into an alien world, as science-fiction writers might say, alien at least to the climate of present academic work on his topics. Mr. Lewis believes in miracles. After Bultmann, need any more be said? With one admission he has placed himself outside the pale of contemporary philosophy of religion. But there is worse to come. The present decline of public interest in Christianity is not due to the growth of the technological city, nor to the spread of the scientific mentality, but to simple ignorance about Christianity. After Bishop Robinson and Harvey Cox, surely there is no point to going on?

But Mr. Lewis entices us into his strange, exotic world of miracles, angels, and immortality by the delightful comfort of his train, which proves to be a veritable train of thought, an argument. The quality of his argument is the chief delight he sets before us. His manner of thinking is the very reverse of eccentric. It is a model of solid common sense and imaginativeness, of balance and ingeniousness, of artistry and coherence. I do not think there is a really weak argument in this book. But how can one argue on behalf of miracles, I hear someone object. The argument is effectively uncomplicated, it is an appeal to the spirit of scientific, that is, open-minded inquiry: "No doubt most stories of miracles are unreliable; but then, as anyone can see by reading the papers, so are most stories of all events. Each story must be taken on its merits: what one must not do is to rule out the supernatural as the one impossible explanation." But this is just what is done; the notion is widespread that miracles just do not happen, that they would be, as Lewis puts it, "a solecism against the grammar of the universe." His point is that people who pride themselves on their liberal views and open-mindedness in some matters show a curiously inconsistent dogmatism when it comes to other matters.

It is not as if the outcome of the argument were predetermined. The reader senses strongly that the author has a willingness to follow it wherever it may lead. In fact it appears that it was just such a willingness which led to his conversion to Christianity. He adopted it because he found it at the end of an argument. Perhaps for this reason the book conveys a massive

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impression of sanity. Whatever else it is, this is not the mind of a fanatic, of one emotionally unbalanced, but eminently sane.

The train-ride of reasoning is thoroughly enjoyable. The land it takes us through may be wonderland. It is all the more than with a slight sense of uneasiness that the traveler discovers at the end of the journey that the scenery about him looks depressingly familiar. It is not only God, and Christianity, and miracles, and immortality which are defended. There is a curious sympathy with capital punishment, there is an antipathy to women exercising religious ministry, there is a warning on the dangers of national repentance, there is an almost predictable traditionalism on lesser issues, which leaves one wondering, a little, whether these are really found at the end of an argument. The book is a splendid defense of the old, of the old which has often enough become bizarre because it is old. It is a defense which is convincingly solid. But one would have liked to stay on till another station turned up.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 75)

"Have you ever been arrested?"

We should not marvel at the feelings of those who must drift back into crime for a living, since we have insisted that arrest makes one unworthy of trust, respect and dignity. We have set up barriers of prejudice which are so high that they can be seen clearly from behind the prison walls.

Forgiving equals forgetting; forgive those whose sentences have been served and forget the entire incident. This is especially important for those of us who pray that we be forgiven as we forgive others. THOMAS CARTEN

9-year-old Poets

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: As a fourth-grade teacher I'm grateful for the insight that Barry Wallenstein brings to the whole issue of children's poetry [Feb. 5]. He raises basic questions and at least points us in the direction of some answers. "When the evaluation (of children's poetry) becomes confused with mature standards of artistic taste, criticism suffers. It is necessary to maintain a critical attitude that appreciates mature poetry and its implications and not accept a single standard of evaluation."

At first I thought Mr. Wallenstein had solved all my problems in this area. I wouldn't have to discard the invaluable educational insights of Kenneth Koch, Ron Padgett, *et al* in order to maintain my own aesthetic. *Stuff* might remain on the shelf next to Wallace Stevens.

But as is so often the case with double standards, it's not that simple. I wonder whether Mr. Wallenstein or Kenneth Koch, or any other "expert" going into a classroom two or three times a week can possibly see the whole problem. For it is in the person of the child, somewhere between Mr. Wallenstein's fourth grade and Mr. Koch's "mature" aesthetic assertion, that the two standards will become one. As a teacher in a self-contained classroom I am faced with beginning the inculcation of artistic standards while at the same time fostering a child's creativity and sense of self-worth. The theorists would tell us, I suppose, that there is no conflict between the two. I wonder if they have ever faced an insecure nine-year-old who wants to know, not if I *like* her simply awful poem, but if it "is good." Until teachers and theorists focus on the ontology of artistic standards in the writing (and reading) of school children, the undermining of these standards will continue.

As far as I know, only Elwyn Richardson, of all the educators writing, has attempted to come to grips with this problem. In *In the Early World* he tells of the evolution of a group aesthetic by his young students during the creation and evaluation of pottery, linocuts and written pieces. One almost wishes Mr. Richardson would violate the narrative purity of his book to suggest how others might accomplish such a feat.

Once again thanks to Barry Wallenstein, and to *Commonweal,* for the stimulating article. MARIAN RONAN

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